

# Kind Caution To Prophane Swearers.

*By a Minister of the Church of England.*

**N**othing can be more piercing to the Heart of a Christian, than to hear the multitudes of Oaths and profane Speeches which proceed out of the Mouths of many People, without any Sense of the Evil they do, or Fear of any thing they must suffer for so doing. To hear the Great and Terrible Name of GOD polluted by Men, which is adored by Angels; and to consider how often that Sacred Name is profaned in common Discourse, which we are not worthy once to mention in our Prayers, is very horrible to all that have not lost the Sense of a Supreme Being. To such I therefore here apply my self, in the Fear of God, and Faithfulness of a Friend, beseeching them to consider, with the Reason that is common to Man, the few things I have to lay before them, with reference to their dangerous Case; for as yet, serious Consideration and Repentance may prevent the everlasting Misery that is coming up on them.

1. In the first place, It must appear to all the Sense of Mankind, the rashest and foolishest thing in the World, to provoke the Wrath of an *infinitely Powerful Being*, and that merely for the sake of a few needless and impudent Words, by which he is justly provoked to cut you off in a Moment, and to cast you into *remediless Torment*. This is what no Man dares do in Cases of less Danger. You dare not revile a *General* at the Head of his Army; no, nor rouze a *Sleeping Lion* when you are within the reach of his Paws. And is the *almighty God* the only contemptible Being in your Account, that may be provoked without Fear, and offended without Punishment? Do you not read what he hath annexed to his *Third Commandment*, namely, *That he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain*; that is, that he will certainly and terribly punish such as profane it. And you are given Minute in Danger of this, for God is a *Righteous Judge*, and will do as he hath said.

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2 And in the next place, your *Baseness* and *Ingratitude* is as great as your *Danger*: For 'tis a most senseless thing to despise that *Almighty Being* which you at other times adore. Is it not a ridiculous Folly to fall on your knees to God one Hour, and to blaspheme him the next? One would not think that this could be done by any one that has any *Sense* or *Consideration*. For it is perfectly horrible to the Reason of Man, that any one should despise the *God that made him*, and in whose *Hands his Breath is*; and by whom he will be made infinitely happy, or unspeakably miserable, to all *Eternity*.

3. This is such an *Extremity of Sin* as can only be matched in Hell, where all are desperate, and without Hope of Mercy. The damned Devils, and the Souls of Men in Hell, may be supposed to rave and blaspheme in their Torment, because they know that their *Chains of Darkness are everlasting*, and can never be knocked off. But for the *Man* that swims in the Rivers of God's Goodness, and is visited with fresh *Proofs* of his Love every Moment; for this *Favorite Creature* to set his *Mouth against the Heavens*; and to blaspheme a gracious, a patient, and bountiful God, is a height of Sin which exceeds the Blackness of Hell it self.

4. And all this is done against God, without so much as pleasing anyone of our selves. It is a tailless and a fruitless Sin. It brings no Pleasure to the Palate, nor Gain to the Purse. And it may even puzzle the profane Person himself to tell us, for what it is he sells his *Soul*? Indeed, he does not sell it all in this Case: he profanely gives away his *Soul*, without Repentance, to the Devil, and parts with a blessed *Eternity* for Nothing.

5. And it is further to be considered, That the Tongue of Man is his *Glory*, and human Speech a sort of *Miracle* in Nature; And it is given to Man, that he might glorify God, who gave it to him. And will you, dare you, pervert the use of so Divine a Gif? Do but consider how wonderful a thing the speech of Man is, which by the little different Motions

of the Tongue and Lips does plainly and distinctly pronounce Millions of Words; Now, to abuse such an excellent Faculty, is much worse than to be wholly deprived of it; so that the Blasphemer is viler than the very Beasts; and the time may come when he shall wish that he had been born as dumb as they; or that his Lips had been perpetually closed, rather than to have opened them to his own Confusion and Condemnation.

6. And 'tis a very unhappy Circumstance of their Sin, that the *Returns* of it are frequent. Tho' it is of so horrible a Nature, and of such infinite Guilt, yet it may be repeated many times in a Mince; yea, we find some multiplying their Oaths in the same Breath. In many other gross Sins it cannot be so: If a *Man* be overcome with Drink, there must be a considerable space of time ere he can be so again; or if he be given to profane the *Sacred Day of our Lord*, he cannot do it every Day. But the *Prophane Swearer* is ready, for another Oath almost before the sound of the first is out of our Ears. Yea, some double and treble them in one Sentence, even so as to confound the *Sense* of what they say, by a horrible dir of Blasphemy. Ah! what a vast heap of these heinous Sins lie at every common Swearer's Door? 't would be apt to sink him almost to despair, if he could see the whole sum of them. And oh! what a *scared and senseless Conscience* has he that feels not this mountainous Weight!

7. Indeed, This outragious Treatment of God's Holy Name seems to be one of the utmost Efforts of the Malice of Man against him. His *Being* is above their reach, and his *Happiness* is unchangeable, and cannot be molested. But his *Name* may be profaned or glorified by Men. And ah! with what spite and Fancour do profane People treat it! And therefore how just is that terrible Threat (*Deut. 28. 36.*) If you shall not fear this *Glorious and Fearful Name*, THE L O R D T H Y G O D, he will make thy *Plagues* wonderful.



8. For, Hereby you harden *Infidels* against the *Christian Religion*. It cannot be expected that they should honour *your God*, when you your selves despise him; or that any should embrace your *Religion*, when you your selves trample it under your feet. Yea (with Grief, and Shame, and Horror be it spoken) 'tis by reason of such scandalous impieties as these, that our *Holy Religion* (the best and purest in it self) is become contemptible amongst the *Heathen*, and that the blessed Name of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and his *Doctrine*, are despised. But *wo unto them by whom these Offences come*; such as never heard the Name of Christ will fare better in the last Judgment than such as know it, and blaspheme it.

9. Yea, God himself testifies that *his Name is great among the Heathen*, Mal. 1. 11. And we find a *Heathen Emperor* making a Decree, That *whosoever spake any thing amiss of Almighty God should be cut in pieces*; and his *House made a Dunghill*, Dan. 3. 9. And it was the first Maxim of a *Heathen Philosopher*, *That the highest Veneration be always paid to God*, Which is indeed the sense of all Mankind, and to think or act otherwise, is to confound the very Order of Nature. And therefore we seldom find any mention of the *Name of God* in the *Holy Scriptures*, without some other word joined with it to strike our Minds with Reverence: As the *Holy Name*, the *Blessed Name*, the *Glorious Name*, the *Great and Terrible Name*. And the *Jews* and *Turks* have always treated it with profound Veneration. So that it must be an inhumane sensetenes and a diabolical Fury to contradict all natural and revealed Religion, and all the sober Sentiments of Mankind, by polluting and prophaning it.

10. And therefore, how light and disproportional is that small Punishment which *our Law* have laid upon this horrible Crime! The *Scandalizing of a Noble Man*, yea, or the *defaming of a Man of Business and Trade*, is usually punished with the Forfei-

ture of *Hundreds of Pounds*: But the *Great and Terrible God* is blasphemed, and People cry out of hard Usage when they pay but a few *Shillings* for the monstrous Offence: But this is a Clamour without Reason; and happy will they be, who by this light Infliction are brought to a timely sense of their Sin and Folly, and so escape everlasting Punishment, in those unquenchable Flames, where the *Blasphemer* may be supposed to cry out of his parched Tongue, and say, *It is justly tormented in these Flames*.

11. Upon the whole, how is every Lover of *God*, of *Man*, and of the *Publick Good*, bound in Conscience to oppose this vile and horrible Sin! to reprove it, to shame it, and in all fit Circumstances to inform the Magistrate of it, and to do their utmost to banish it from humane Society. For it breaks the bounds of all that is *Sacred, Civil, or Decent*; and it is a most high Offence against *God*, and an Affront to all that bear the Name of *Christ*, who are by *solemn Vows* obliged to resent and oppose it.

12. For where this direful Sin prevails, how does it render that place a sort of Hell upon Earth. *God* is greatly honoured in the Regions above. His *Angels* bless him perpetually, and the *Saints* above praise, love, admire, and adore him. Yea the *Birds* seem, in their way, to sing forth the *Praises* of their *Creator*: And the inanimate Creatures observe the *Laws* of their *Creation*. But wicked Men and damned Devils blaspheme the *Name* of the most high *God*, and do him dishonour. But let me entreat all Persons whatsoever, that have Reason and self-love, that they cast not themselves into this accursed Herd of *Blasphemers*; lest after a little Partnership with them in their Sin, they be for ever conjoined with them in their Punishment.

*If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thy self; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it*, Prov. 9. 12.

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